

Toronto Police Accountability Coalition
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January 16, 2024.

To: Budget Committee
City of Toronto

Subject: **Police 2024 Operating Budget**

Please list our organization as a deputant at the January 22 meeting.

Our organization responded to the proposed 2024 operating budget of the Toronto Police Service with the attached letter. As we make clear in the letter, **there are many ways in which efficiencies can be found in the budget without compromising police services. The ratio of police officers to civilians can be reversed in areas such as traffic and ticketing, parades and demonstrations, and mental crisis calls.** We are not arguing that officers are sometimes not required in these areas, but rather than in most cases civilians can do a similar or even better job at less cost.

As well, there are areas where fewer officers are needed: **there is no need for always requiring two officers in a car after dark (a practice abandoned by most police forces in North America); random vehicle patrol is not a useful exercise and some of those officers should be used to respond to Priority One calls which clearly needs more resources; and the number of officers assigned to current model of Neighbour Policing seems to be a very unwise investment, given the limited change they are making.** Addressing these issues probably means that 300 additional officers, as recommended by the Chief, are not required.

In short, there are many efficiencies to be found with a saving of taxpayer dollars. The argument by police officials that a cut of \$12 million to the \$1.2 billion budget will result in "a significant risk to the community" is ludicrous.

We are not aware of any definitive research that shows that crime levels are significantly impacted by having more police officers.

Several motions were moved at the Police Board meeting on January 9 by Councillors Cheng and Morley, but were defeated by the Board. We are very concerned that the city appointee, Nadine Spenser, voted against the councillors. We believe those motions should be adopted by the Budget Committee and by Council since at most they simply ask the Chief to provide information about how the police service spends public money. Those motions are:

- a) That the Chief examine the legal and operational feasibility of reducing reliance on officers for public events, and traffic and congestion, to be replaced by civilians and redeploy officers to other areas as needed with a report back in 2024;
- b) That the pilot project review and study reducing staffing requirements in police cars at night be expedited and include a timeline of potential implementation;
- c) That the Chief report on the cost of all suspensions with pay in 2023;
- d) That the Chief report on the total cost for recording, storage, redacting and analysis of all body camera footage in 2023; and
- e) That the Chief provide the TPS Board with an update on the technology to report policing hours and how they are allocated in March 2024.

An argument made by the Chair of the Board, Ann Morgan, was that the Board should not consider these matters since they are operational, and that the Board cannot make decisions about operational policies and their implementation. That argument is false. This is a thoroughly debunked excuse for abnegating the Board's statutory oversight obligations, and her reliance on this canard should disqualify her from continuing in the role.

Judge John Morden, who headed the Independent Civilian Review of the G20 Summit, concluded in his 2012 report that "The Board has limited its consultative mandate and viewed it as improper to ask questions about,

comment on, and make recommendations concerning operational matters. The Board's approach in this regard has been wrong."

Section 31(4) of The Police Services Act states: 'The board shall not direct the chief of police with respect to specific operational decisions or with respect to the day-to-day operation of the police force.' The reference to "operational decisions" and "day-to-day operation" do not include operational policy or operations informed by policy. The Board is not constrained from questioning or enacting policy regarding police activities.

Apart from the reductions we have proposed above, and the motions to get information about specific police activities, we urge you to adopt TPAC's original proposals to the Board (attached), and we ask the Committee to consider one further matter:

That any salary increase for 2024 resulting from the collective agreement negotiations be absorbed into the police budget, and not treated as an add-on.

Policing must complement and enhance other organizations and institutions helping to keep our city health and vibrant. It must be run efficiently so that public funds can be used wisely. We believe the Budget Committee can assist in achieving these goals.

Yours truly,

John Sewell for
Toronto Police Accountability Coalition